
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



Board of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Court Approves Settlement Agreement Resolving Jackson Demonstration State Forest Litigation

Fort Bragg, CA – A settlement agreement has been reached concerning two formerly contested timber harvesting plans on the Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF). Mendocino Superior Court Judge Richard J. Henderson issued the order Aug. 26, 2008 instructing the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and two Mendocino County-based timber companies to proceed with the harvesting plan as outlined in the JDSF 2008 Management Plan. The order eliminates potential for any new litigation over a recently completed environmental impact report for the forest.

The settlement agreement was signed by the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, CAL FIRE, and litigants Campaign to Restore Jackson State Redwood Forest, Dharma Cloud Charitable Foundation Trust, and the Forests Forever Foundation. The agreement also was signed by Mendocino Redwood Company and Willits Redwood Company, which hold contracts for the contested timber harvesting plans.

“The department is very pleased with the successful conclusion of this lengthy negotiation process,” said CAL FIRE Director Ruben Grijalva. “Completion of this agreement resolves all outstanding legal issues regarding past management on JDSF and permits the department to move forward with the implementation of the new Forest Management Plan that was approved by the board in January.”

Board Chairman Stan Dixon commented, “This agreement provides a good outcome for all parties. Litigation against the state is resolved, environmental protection concerns of the plaintiffs have been addressed and the two timber sale holders have received a fair outcome with respect to their existing timber harvest contracts.”

Vince Taylor, Executive Director of the Campaign to Restore Jackson State Forest, said, "All of the parties to this agreement put the well-being of Jackson Forest above the narrow interests of

their businesses and organizations. I'm especially grateful to Mendocino Redwood Company and Willits Redwood Company for allowing Brandon Gulch and Camp 3 be managed for restoration toward old growth. I am happy that we are now all working together to make Jackson Forest the world-class forest it deserves to be."

Mike Jani, President and Chief Forester of Mendocino Redwood Company said, "Our company's success is directly tied to efforts by all to promote the right way forward, both on our forestlands and in the communities where we live and do business. Coming together, as we have done here, is a commitment to JDSF's important role in the future of the Redwood Region."

"JDSF is an important resource to Willits and Fort Bragg," said Bruce Burton, President of Willits Redwood Company. "The resumption of an active timber sales program will add vital spark to our communities. Though it's been disappointing the process has taken so long, hopefully the work in the future can be concentrated in the Forest, not in the boardroom or courtroom."

JDSF is a 48,650-acre, predominantly redwood and Douglas-fir forest located in Mendocino County. It was established in the late 1940s for the purpose of research and demonstration of economic forest management. Timber harvesting on the forest had been halted since 2003 due to litigation regarding management plans and compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The department is working to resume timber harvest during the 2008 harvesting season.

Earlier this year, the Board and CAL FIRE established the JDSF Advisory Group to provide public input on the management of JDSF. The fourteen-member Advisory Group held its first meeting in May and plans to meet monthly while it undertakes its substantial initial advisory responsibilities. The Advisory Group is chaired by John Helms, Professor Emeritus of Silviculture at the University of California, Berkeley.

Information about JDSF, the JDSF Advisory Group, and the JDSF Management Plan is available on the CAL FIRE Web site at

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_stateforests_jackson.php

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